

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 0136

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IR

SUBJECT: MAHNAZ AFKHAMI NAMED MINISTER OF STATE FOR
WOMEN'S AFFAIRS

REF: 75 TEHRAN A-184

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. MAHNAZ AFKHAMI, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION OF IRAN(WOI), WAS NAMED MINISTER OF STATE FOR WOMEN'S AFFAIRS DECEMBER 30 ON THE EVE OF WOI'S 12TH REGIONAL SEMINAR ON WOMEN'S STATUS. HER POST IS A NEW ONE, AND SHE IS ONLY THE SECOND WOMAN EVER TO HOLD A CABINET POST IN IRAN(FIRST WAS FORMER MINISTER OF EDUCATION FAROUKHURU PARSA).

2. PARTIAL BIO DATA PROVIDED REFAIRGRAM; ADDITIONAL AND CORECTED MATERIAL GIVEN BELOW:

MAHNAZ AFKHAMI, BORN 1941 IN KERMEN PROVINCE. ATTENDED HIGH SCHOOL IN U.S., GRADUATING FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.'S ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL IN 1957. SHE RECEIVED HER BA IN 1966 AND MA IN 1967 FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO. WHILE IN THE U.S. SHE WORKED ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND LECTURED AT COLORADO. UPON RETURNING TO TEHRAN, SHE BECAME ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT TEHRAN'S NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, AND WAS WVENTUALLY NAMED CHARIMAN OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT THERE UNTIL HER APPOINTMENT AS HEAD OF WOI IN LATE 1971. SHE IS MARRIED TO THE
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HEAD OF IRAN'S LITERACY CAMPAIGN, GHOLAM REZA AFKHAMI, A

FORMER INTERIOR MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY. THEY HAVE ONE NINE-YEAR OLD SON. END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. MRS. AFKAHAMI HAS BEEN A PROTEGE OF PRIME MINISTER HOVEYDA FOR SOME TIME, YET HAS ALSO MANAGED TO DEVELOP CLOSE TIES WITH PRINCESS ASHRAF, THE SHAH'S TWIN SISTER WHO IS PRESIDENT OF WOI. MRS. AFKHAMI IS A CHARMING, VERY SOCIAL, ARTICULATE AND INTELLIGENT WOMAN WHO IS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO THE U.S. AND FRIENDLY WITH EMBASSY OFFICIALS. WHILE DEFINITELY COMMITTED TO IMPROVING IRANIAN WOMEN'S LOT, SHE IS NOT A RADICAL WOMEN'S LIBERATIONIST, PREFERRING TO FOREGO MORE FLAMBOYANT ISSUES IN FAVOR OF DEALING IN THE PERSIAN CONTEXT WITH WOMEN'S PROBLEMS SUCH AS CHILD CARE, EDUCATION, AND JOB OPPORTUNITY. ONE OF IRAN'S OUTSPOKEN YOUNG MODERS, SHE APPEARS TO HAVE THE PERSONAL SKILL AND ENERGY TO DEVELOP EVEN GREATER INFLUENCE IN IRANIAN POLITICS. END CONFIDENTIAL.
HELMS

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